

GAME CHANGER

Nett Warrior provides cutting-edge technologies for situational awareness and communications

by MAJ Douglas W. Copeland



‘TECHNOLOGY IS MOVING FORWARD’

LTC Roland Gaddy, PM GS, gives a program overview during the Nett Warrior Future Initiatives Demonstration April 5 at Fort Belvoir, VA. (U.S. Army photo courtesy of PEO Soldier.)

Emerging technologies are key to ensuring that the Army constantly adapts to remain a well-equipped force that is second to none. This is one of the overriding principles in the Army’s development of Soldier-worn situational awareness (SA) and communications solutions. Yet it is not the only principle at work.

Members of Product Manager Ground Soldier (PM GS) conducted a demonstration in April to present future initiatives in technology to the Program Executive Officer (PEO) Soldier and other Army leaders.

The demonstration featured several network, hardware, and software solutions identified by PM GS during extensive market research over a six-month period. The purpose of the event was to inform key stakeholders of what is in the “realm of the possible” for Soldier-worn SA and communication solutions. The demonstration showed how leveraging commercial technologies could reduce the size, weight, power, and cost of future Soldier systems, such as PM GS’s Nett Warrior (NW).

NETT WARRIOR CAPABILITIES

NW is an integrated dismounted Soldier system in development that provides unparalleled SA, allowing faster and more accurate decisions in the tactical fight. NW is the



SMARTPHONE APPLICATION

Dr. David Darkow, with the Natick Soldier Research, Development, and Engineering Center, demonstrates Nett Warrior software on an Android smartphone operating system. (U.S. Army photo courtesy of PEO Soldier.)

platform that will be used as the foundation to address SA and command and control for the tactical small unit.

At the demonstration in April, PM GS detailed the constraints associated with pursuing commercial network, hardware, and software solutions and identified where waivers would be required and which agencies would need to provide waivers or allowances.

LTC Roland Gaddy, PM GS, kicked off the event.

“Technology is moving forward and changes are coming. We must continue to evolve; however, technology is not the issue,” Gaddy said, referring to the availability of commercial hardware and software that can be used right now on the battlefield. “Statutes, policies, and processes are the challenge to providing game-changing technology.”

Obtaining clearance or authorization to integrate these technologies into future NW initiatives will require relief from

various categories of constraints at the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, Army, and DOD levels, Gaddy said.

CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGY

The technologies demonstrated included network solutions designed for various Soldier operating environments, to include man-portable ad hoc networks, encrypted commercial wireless networks, one-way and two-way Position Location Information Isolators, and Android operating system applications running the NW software on mobile devices.

“We are evaluating high-speed, cutting-edge technologies and stressing fight-ability,” said Jason Regnier, Deputy PM NW. “Today’s battlefield mandates extremely reliable technology to combat an agile and adaptive enemy. Just staying ahead isn’t enough anymore; we are providing game-changing technologies to win the fight.”

The demonstration also addressed materiel solutions for data transfer between unclassified and secret networks at the

tactical level. Tactical demonstrations outside the Fort Belvoir [VA] Officers’ Club allowed the participants to send and receive mission-essential data via their mobile devices and NW, to display screens visible inside the building.

The event is the first in a series of technology demonstrations planned by PEO Soldier to evaluate emerging technologies with warfighter applications that complement the NW program. The next event, the Joint User Interoperability Communications Exercise, was held at Fort Bliss, TX, in June. At the event, PM GS worked with the Signal Center of Excellence to demonstrate interoperability with tactical cellular capabilities.

MAJ DOUGLAS W. COPELAND is the Assistant PM GS. He holds a B.S. from Texas Christian University and an M.B.A. from the Naval Postgraduate School. Cope-land is certified Level III in program management and Level I in information technology. He is a U.S. Army Acquisition Corps member.